

**THE HISTORY OF SPANISH
LANGUAGE MINISTRY AT GRACE
LUTHERAN CHURCH IN FALLS
CHURCH, VIRGINIA**

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“The world has come to us.”

Ever since Christ ascended to his throne of glory, Christians have occupied themselves with taking Christ’s Word to all corners of the globe. In the past, this meant long, dangerous journeys over land and sea. Today we see world missionaries with specialized training and detailed ministry plans. For some congregations however, reaching out to the world does not require a passport or plane ticket, it requires no more than a stroll down the sidewalk of their community.

Grace Lutheran Church in Falls Church, Virginia, is a congregation which can say, “The world has come to us.” This is the story of how God has blessed this congregation’s efforts to reach out with the gospel to the Spanish speakers of their community.¹

Grace Recognizes an Opportunity

Grace Lutheran Church was founded in 1963 when Pastor Walter Beckmann moved east hoping to establish a WELS presence on the East Coast. At first, the congregation consisted mainly of transplanted Midwesterners who were working in Washington D.C. The congregation grew and its desire to share the gospel became apparent from early on. Since 1970, Grace has helped daughter or start four congregations in the Washington D.C. metro area.² Pastor Beckmann became the first District President of the North Atlantic District and he remained a pastor at Grace throughout the rest of his ministry. He still resides in Falls Church and is a member of the congregation.

¹ This history is primarily based on two interviews and the author’s recollection from his vicar year in Falls Church, VA (August 2009-August 2009). The general history of how Grace came to have a Hispanic ministry is based on an interview with Pastor Kevin Wattles conducted on November 2, 2009. The history pertaining to how this ministry was carried out is based on of an interview with Pastor Tim Satorius conducted on November 16, 2009.

² Revised Basic Information and Request Form, (submitted to North Atlantic District Mission Board on April 1, 2009), Addenda 1-6.

In 1996, Kevin Wattles graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and was assigned to be the associate of the North Atlantic District President at Grace Lutheran Church in Falls Church, Virginia. It did not take long for Pastor Wattles to see that Falls Church was a unique setting with unique ministry opportunities. On the sidewalks and in the grocery stores walked people of every color and language. A large percentage of this diverse group spoke Spanish. Pastor Wattles noticed that as he knocked on doors in the neighborhood around the church, about one-third of those who answered spoke Spanish. He found this language barrier to be a challenge.

In the summer of 1997, Pastor Wattles returned to the campus of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary for an event called "Parish Ministry Enhancement." At this event, pastors who had graduated the previous year came back to the Seminary campus to continue their education, share ministry ideas, and encourage one another. Pastor Wattles remembers talking with one of his classmates, Michael Roth, at this event. Roth had spent his vicar year in Puerto Rico and had received his first call to start a Spanish ministry at Christ Lutheran Church on the South Side of Milwaukee. Pastor Wattles told Pastor Roth about the concentration of Hispanics in the Falls Church area. Pastor Roth encouraged him to attend a Hispanic Ministry Conference which would be held the next year.

Things worked out so that Pastor Wattles could attend. With the blessing of his congregation, he soon found himself in Las Vegas sitting among the proponents of Hispanic ministry in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). The conference gave Pastor Wattles exposure to Hispanic ministry and, maybe more importantly, it put Hispanic ministry on the minds of the members at Grace.

Unfortunately, the reality of ministry is that a church can only do what its resources allow it to do. Near the end of the 1990's, Grace was carrying out a renovation and expansion project. It seemed for the time that Hispanic ministry would have to wait. Then in 1999, AAL offered an "Openings Grant" which was available to congregations who were interested in doing outreach in the community. Grace applied for the grant, stating that it intended to use the money for Spanish language training. Grace received \$10,000 which funded Spanish classes for Pastor Wattles, the school principal and his wife, and another teacher at Grace Lutheran School. They enrolled in classes at Diplomatic Language Services which was the school that provided language training for various U.S. government agencies. Pastor Wattles soon came the conclusion that if he wanted to become fluent in Spanish, it would have to be in an immersion experience. It also became clear that even if Pastor Wattles would become fluent in Spanish, it would be very difficult for him to effectively minister to both English and Spanish speaking congregations. Perhaps the greatest benefit of the AAL grant was that it eased the congregation into the idea of Hispanic ministry without a large commitment.

In 2002 the congregation dedicated their newly expanded facilities. As the congregation admired this blessing from God the members began to ask how they could make use of the new space. They began discussing the feasibility of holding a contemporary worship service. The idea of Hispanic ministry was also on the minds of the members.

The Lord Makes Hispanic Ministry a Reality

The turning point for beginning a Hispanic ministry at Grace came in 2004. At a pastors' conference, Pastor Tim Wempner, who was the chairman of the North Atlantic District Mission Board, mentioned in his report that grant money was available to churches who wanted to start or jumpstart ministries. Pastor Wattles delivered this news to the members at Grace. Up to this

point, the lack of funding to start Hispanic ministry had been the hurdle that no one seemed to know how to jump over. It seemed that the Lord had knocked over the hurdle.

While most of the members of Grace supported a plan to pursue Hispanic ministry, some had reservations. Of this group, some were worried that Grace would be helping illegal aliens if they started a Hispanic ministry. Others did not understand why Spanish speakers could not learn English. There were some voices which tried to employ a Washingtonian stall tactic: "Let's study the idea some more." In the end, these members were satisfied with the answers they received and the proposal moved forward.

The members of Grace rallied around the idea of applying for a Level Two grant from the Board for Home Missions. This grant would supply funding for three years while Grace would pick up more and more of the financial responsibility each year. The voters decided to place the future of Hispanic ministry in God's hands. If their application was accepted, they would move forward, if not, they would have to reevaluate.

On March 18, 2005, Grace Lutheran Church sent the following letter to accompany the completed grant application:

Dear Members of the North Atlantic District Board for Home Missions:

Greetings in the name of our risen and ascended Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who has commissioned us to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19)!

It is in the spirit of the risen Christ and of gospel outreach in his name that we bring this proposal before you for partnership between the WELS Board for Home Missions and our congregation, Grace, Falls Church, Virginia, to do gospel outreach to Spanish-speaking Hispanics in the Falls Church area.

On behalf of the members of our congregation we thank you for taking the time and making the effort to consider this partnership opportunity. Should you and your fellow members of the WELS Board for Home Missions agree to partner with us, we heartily look forward to working with you in this great outreach opportunity that our Lord has placed before us.

Sincerely in Christ,

Kevin Wattles
Pastor, Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

David Metzger
Chairman, Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church³

The grant application outlined the congregation's plan to carry out this ministry. At the time of the application, Grace had in its ranks an eleven person nucleus of Spanish speaking members. This core group consisted of a Bolivian family which had joined the church six years earlier, a young member family made up of an American husband and a Mexican wife along with their two children, and another married couple made up of an American husband and a Panamanian wife who were prospective members. While the application was under review, the five-member Bolivian family which made up almost half of the Spanish speaking nucleus returned to Bolivia. With them gone, the Spanish speaking nucleus only contained one church member who was a native Spanish speaker! Circumstances eventually brought the Bolivian family back to America although their intention had been to remain in Bolivia.

Even with a Hispanic nucleus in jeopardy of losing almost half of its members, Grace had no problem showing on their application that there was a great opportunity for doing ministry among Spanish speakers in Falls Church. They included these statistics on their application:

- According to the *2000 U.S. Decennial Census*, the total population of Fairfax County, Virginia (the county in which Grace is located) was 969,749 people. The county's current population is over one million people.
- According to the *2000 U.S. Decennial Census*, 106,958 of the 969,749 people are of Hispanic ethnicity.
- According to the *2000 U.S. Decennial Census*, of the 48,092 people living in the Fairfax County Planning District in which our congregation is located (Jefferson Planning District), 9,657 people are Hispanic. Hispanics make up the highest minority population in the neighborhood around our congregation.

³ Letter to North Atlantic District Mission Board, Addenda 2-1.

- According to the 2000 U.S. Decennial Census, of the 18,366 households in the Jefferson Planning District, 2,510 households are occupied by Hispanics. Of those 2,510 households 735 are "linguistically isolated," speaking only Spanish in the household. Second to English, Spanish is the language most often spoken in the neighborhood around our congregation.⁴

They also noted that no Lutheran church in Fairfax County was doing Spanish language ministry at the time. These statistics made a strong case for the Board for Home Missions to consider.

Grace was not just chasing statistics however. They clearly stated in the application that the start of Hispanic ministry would fall in line with the church's mission statement: "In order to carry out our Savior's Great Commission, we intend:... To reach out with loving Christian witness to all with whom we come into contact, especially those residing in the immediate neighborhood of our church."⁵ The mission zeal of the congregation was also evident in the fact that as the congregation moved towards approving a new Hispanic ministry, they were also actively discussing the addition of a staff-minister in order to start a contemporary worship service.

The Level Two grant which Grace applied for would subsidize the new ministry for three years, decreasing in the amount received each year. The total amount of grant money requested was \$94,419, to be received over three years ending June of 2008. These funds would cover the new pastor's salary and health care. The original plan for calling a pastor was written in the application as follows: "Grace's current thinking is that this person would be a ^{in 2005} graduate of our Seminary's upcoming graduating class (May 2005). While Grace recognizes that there may be available graduates who are fluent in Spanish, Grace's encouragement to the Assignment Committee would be "to assign the best candidate for this outreach ministry."⁶

⁴ Revised Basic Information and Request Form, Addenda 1-5

⁵ Revised Basic Information and Request Form, Addenda 1-4.

⁶ Original Basic Information and Request Form, (submitted to the North Atlantic District Mission Board on March 18, 2005).

Grace sent their application to the North Atlantic District Mission Board. When the board members prioritized all of the applications, Grace's Hispanic ministry project was second on the district's list. The District Mission Board then forwarded summaries of the various requests for consideration by the Board for Home Missions. With applications coming in from all of the districts, it did not seem likely that a project listed as the number two priority of a district would have much of a chance of being accepted. The Lord's hand was at work and a few weeks later the news came that Grace was given the grant to start this new ministry.

As they had planned, Grace submitted a request for a Seminary graduate to the new North Atlantic District President, Joel Petermann. Pastor Wattles traveled to Mequon, Wisconsin, in order to be able to meet the graduate assigned to Grace. As the names of the candidates were read with their corresponding calls, the words, "Grace in Falls Church, Virginia" were never spoken. While there were Spanish speakers in the graduating class, God saw fit to say, "Not now," to Grace Lutheran Church. It turned out that God knew what he was doing.

Pastor Wattles returned to Virginia with the disappointing news. During this time, the congregation found special comfort in the account of Acts chapter 15 and the vision of the man of Macedonia. They trusted that the Lord was in control.

Despite the disappointment of not receiving a graduate, the congregation did not hesitate in their decision to call an active pastor from the field. Pastor Wattles contacted the Synod's Spanish Ministry Consultant, Michael Roth, for a list of possible candidates. On Sunday, June 12th, 2005, not even a month after receiving the disappointing news that they would not receive a seminary graduate, Grace extended a call to Pastor Tim Satorius.

As a note of interest, at this same meeting, Grace also issued a call to Levi Nagel to serve as a staff minister. That the congregation was ready to call and support two new called workers is evidence of their mission zeal and trust in God.

Pastor Tim Satorius was a missionary serving in Antigua when he was called to Grace. He had graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1989 and was first assigned to serve as a tutor at Nebraska Lutheran High School (NLHS) in Waco, Nebraska. At NLHS, Pastor Satorius taught German classes among other subjects. This was ironic because he had spent half of his vicar year learning Spanish in Mexico, and the other half working in Spanish under several missionaries in Puerto Rico.

After his two year tutorage in Waco, Pastor Satorius was assigned to serve in Puerto Rico. He served as pastor of two congregations in Puerto Rico from 1991 to 1998. During this time he also became the field coordinator for the missionaries in Puerto Rico and helped teach Bible Institute and seminary level classes to pastoral candidates. Pastor Satorius also began to do exploratory mission work in the Dominican Republic. His work eventually resulted in a new Latin America mission field for the WELS.

In 1995, the Board for Home Missions and the Board for World Missions held a conference to discuss ministry in the Caribbean. At this meeting, they talked about an opportunity to reach the growing population of Dominicans who were living in Antigua. Antigua already had a thriving congregation of English speakers and the hope was to begin outreach to Spanish speakers on the island. At the conference, it was decided that Spanish speaking WELS missionaries and lay workers from Puerto Rico would travel to Antigua on weekends to teach Bible classes.

The Spanish language work was carried out and eventually the ministry in Antigua grew to the point that a full-time missionary was needed. The Lord chose for this position was a man who not only had been involved with the weekend visits, but also already had experience working with Dominicans, Tim Satorius. He and his family moved to Antigua with the plan of staying one year. One year became two, and then in 2000, the call to serve Spanish speakers in Antigua became permanent. With all of this Spanish outreach experience, humanly speaking, Pastor Satorius seemed to fit the needs of Grace Lutheran Church very well.

After the call meeting in which Grace decided to call Pastor Satorius, the president of the congregation attempted to telephone him with the news. When he asked to speak with Pastor Satorius, the voice on the other end of the line told him, "He's off the island."⁷ Pastor Satorius was on furlough with his family in Jackson, Wisconsin. It took some time and several more phone calls to track his location down, but finally they were able to contact him and share with him the news of the call.

The call itself included this description of the ministry:

- Lead Spanish Language Outreach Ministry at Grace;
- Work together with, and in harmony with, the members of Grace, the existing ministries of Grace, Pastor Beckmann, Pastor Wattles, and the teachers of GLS;
- Do all that may be necessary for the advancement of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Washington metro area.⁸

The specifics of the new ministry were purposely left vague. Grace had previously noted in their application for the grant that they intended to let the Spanish language pastor decide those details. They indicated this intention in a revised version of their application:

Grace does not think it would be good for the overall and long-term success of this outreach ministry for anyone to mandate to Pastor Satorius what his initial approaches to this ministry ought to be. Grace believes it to be in the best interest of the success of this

⁷ Kevin Wattles interview

⁸ Spanish Language Outreach Pastor Call Letter, Addenda 3-2.

outreach effort for Pastor Satorius to have maximum input into the initial outreach plans, and to therefore have his "buy in" to the plan.⁹

Pastor Satorius waited until he returned to Antigua to make his decision. After prayerful deliberation, he accepted the call in August but requested that he and his family remain in Antigua for a time so that he could help the young Spanish speaking congregation prepare for the transition. The decision seemed wise to all who were involved and arrangements were made for the Satorius family to arrive in Virginia in April of 2006.

Establishing the Hispanic Congregation

Pastor Satorius, his wife Lorna and their four children arrived in Falls Church, Virginia at the beginning of May, 2006. The Lord had brought the worker to the field and now there was much work to be done. Pastor Satorius preached his first sermon on the following Sunday. His text was Isaiah 56:1-8 and his theme was "Open the Door."¹⁰ In his sermon he encouraged the congregation with the truth that God has not excluded any foreigner from his grace. He urged the members of Grace Lutheran Church to adopt this same attitude.

During the next couple months, Pastor Satorius spent much of his time listening. In fact, his advice to anyone who might find himself in a similar situation would be, "Listen!" One of the first groups of people that Pastor Satorius listened to upon his arrival was the English-speaking members of the congregation. He sat down and interviewed the church's leaders to get to know the congregation better. He also held several open forums during Bible class hour and in the evenings in order to answer any questions and address any concerns people had.

The concerns that people had were similar to those which were voiced when the congregation first considered Hispanic ministry. There were those who questioned the

⁹ Revised Basic Information and Request Form, Addenda 1-5.

¹⁰ Pastor Satorius' first sermon at Grace, Addenda 4-1.

immigration status of the Hispanics whom Pastor Satorius would be reaching. Others wondered how the structure of the congregation would be affected if the Spanish speaking congregation would one day grow to outnumber the English speakers. Pastor Satorius answered the questions as best as he could and made an effort to show from Scripture the importance of the new ministry.

Although there were some skeptical voices, Pastor Satorius came away from his listening sessions encouraged. It became very obvious to him that the congregation was committed to Hispanic ministry and that they had a desire to reach the lost.

Pastor Satorius also made an effort during this time to meet with the Spanish speaking nucleus at Grace. Although the group was not that large, their participation in the new ministry was vital. Pastor Satorius wanted to find out what their perspective was. He wanted to begin to establish a relationship with them, meet their family and friends, and begin to make a network of contacts.

Another important objective of Pastor Satorius in the first few months was to get to know the neighborhood. He knocked on doors and talked to those who lived in the community. He talked to people in the supermarket and at the stores. He visited local businesses which catered to the Hispanic customers.

Pastor Satorius soon began to see first hand the diversity of the area, even diversity among Spanish speakers. It became clear that in some ways he would have to adjust his mindset and learn a whole new set of cultures. In Puerto Rico, he was a foreigner living in that one specific culture. In Antigua, he was a foreigner living in the Antiguan culture and working with the Dominican culture. In Falls Church, he was no longer the foreigner and the people he was going to be serving came from many different countries in Central America, South America and

the Caribbean. For example, Northern Virginia has a high concentration of Bolivian immigrants. Pastor Satorius soon recognized that their culture is more formal than the cultures he had previously served in. Pastor Satorius never would have learned these cultural tendencies had he only been talking and not listening.

Pastor Satorius also took time during the first couple of months to visit other local churches that were involved in Hispanic ministry. In this way, he was able to get to know the community and evaluate how the Hispanic population was being served by other Christian churches.

As Pastor Satorius did all of these things, he made connections in the community and began networking. Only a couple of days after the Satorius family had arrived in Virginia, Grace held its annual community festival, "Meet Us, Meet Your Neighbor," which drew upwards of 700 people from the neighborhood. After the event, Pastor Satorius had a list of Spanish speaking contacts which he followed up on throughout the summer. The list grew through other outreach minded activities such as the Summer Bible Camp for kids, English as a second language classes, and the renting of a booth at a local flea market where he conducted interviews. Grace Lutheran School also became a source of contacts as interested parents came inquiring about the school. In the fall of 2006, Grace held its first Hispanic community festival. This was just one more way to meet people in the neighborhood.

Once he had established a rapport with some of the people on the list of contacts, Pastor Satorius offered to sit down with them in a Bible study. Many of these classes were done in the homes of those who were interested. Pastor Satorius made a conscious effort to get into as many homes as possible during his first months. He realized the time commitment which a regular

Sunday morning worship service would eventually require so he took advantage of his more flexible schedule while he could.

Pastor Satorius had decided that the first Spanish worship service would be held about six months after he had begun his work. The date for the service was set for November 19th, 2006. The busy Sunday morning lineup at Grace caused some scheduling difficulties. The English speaking congregation had recently added another service which resulted in English worship being offered at 8:30, 10:00, and 11:30 on Sunday mornings. The Spanish service was slated in at 1:30 pm with Spanish Bible class and Sunday School to be held afterwards. In preparation for this service, Pastor Satorius ran ads in the local newspaper and advertised with fliers in the community. That day, seventy-five people were in attendance and sixty of them were Hispanics.

During the next couple of months, Sunday worship attendance averaged around thirty. Pastor Satorius spent much of his time educating and teaching this group, most of whom had never known anything about Lutheranism. He did not initially offer the Lord's Supper because only those who were part of the original Spanish speaking nucleus were members of Grace. The first confirmations of the young church, now called La Iglesia Luteran Gracia y Paz (Grace and Peace Lutheran Church), came on April 1st of 2007. To date, there have been thirty confirmations in the congregation.¹¹

Maybe even more so than in American Christianity, Lutheranism in Hispanic cultures has a unique middle of the road appeal. On one side is the Catholic Church which has historically dominated Hispanic culture, and on the other side is the Evangelical/Pentecostal emotional reaction to Catholicism. In the middle is Lutheranism which maintains liturgical worship and has the pure gospel. Pastor Satorius adopted a style of worship which was liturgical but not overly formal. The pastor and vicar wear albs but do not preach from the pulpit. Hymns and songs are

¹¹ Iglesia Luterana Gracia y Paz three year anniversary pamphlet, Addenda 5-2.

usually accompanied by the piano, guitar and very often a bongo drum or drum set. The worship setting is one that has familiar aspects both for those who come out of Catholicism and, to a lesser degree, those who come from an Evangelical/Pentecostal background.

The reality for Lutherans doing Hispanic outreach is that most people from Latin America know little or nothing about Lutheranism. This phenomenon has turned out to be both a blessing and a curse for Gracia y Paz. Some visitors come, are curious, and want to learn more about Lutheranism. Others are very skeptical stepping into the church of a denomination that they have never heard of. Many of the visitors who come to Gracia y Paz readily admit that they thought they were going to a Catholic Church. Pastor Satorius^r has not made a big issue out trying or not trying to look "Catholic." He prefers to let God's Word do the convincing.

Every young congregation faces its share^{of} challenges and it was no different for La Iglesia Luterana Gracia y Paz. Some of the first challenges the congregation faced had to do with bilingual families. Often, the second generation of Hispanic immigrants in America prefers to speak English over Spanish. Spanish Sunday^S School for the children of Spanish speaking parents might seem logical, but it may not be the best way to reach these kids with the gospel. Even sitting through an hour long Spanish worship service becomes difficult for some children. Pastor Satorius recognized this difficulty and several changes were made.

The first adjustment that was made was in the service time. As mentioned earlier, the Hispanic congregation originally met at 1:30 pm for worship with Bible class and Sunday^S School following. In order to allow the Hispanic children to attend Sunday^S School in English, it was decided that there would be two separate Sunday^S School sessions which coincided with the two later English services. The times of the English worship services were also moved up a half an hour to allow for this change. Unfortunately, it is often true that the little things cause the biggest

stirs. Not everyone in the English congregation was pleased with the change in service times and one family even left the congregation over it. However, the change benefited the Hispanic congregation tremendously. The Spanish worship service was moved to 12:30 pm which made it convenient for the Hispanic children to attend English Sunday School at 11:00am. This also allowed for an overlap during which the English and Spanish speaking worshipers could see and greet each other. Before this time, the Hispanics arrived to a church building which seemed empty and lifeless because all of the activity of the morning had ended.

Another change which Pastor Satorius made to accommodate the bilingual families was to deliver the children's message in English rather than in Spanish. This change came as soon as it became clear that the children preferred English over Spanish. The parents also appreciated that their children would be taught in their most comfortable language.

During the three years of its existence, the congregation has experienced other growing pains common among a group which is young in the faith. Pastor Satorius has struggled at times in having the congregation take ownership of their ministry. Those with Catholic roots can be hesitant to take initiative because the Catholic Church does not normally involve its laity in ministry. Currently, Pastor Satorius is training the leaders of the congregation in hopes of getting more people plugged into the areas of ministry where their interests and talents lay.

The following chart shows the diversity of La Iglesia Luterana Gracia y Paz and the diverse ways in which they came in contact with the church. There are 49 families currently involved in the congregation.

<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Original Contact with Gracia y Paz</u>
19 - Bolivia	11 - Friendship evangelism
7 - El Salvador	6 - Visited the church
4 - Venezuela	6 - English as a second language
4 - Mexico	6 - Kid's activities

¹² Tim Satorius interview

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|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 3 – Honduras | 6 – Grace Lutheran School |
| 2 – Dominican Republic | 5 – Community festivals |
| 2 – Columbia | 4 – Already had connections to Grace |
| 2 – United States (Pastor and Vicar) | 2 – Called workers |
| 1 – Chile | 1 – Watched “Time of Grace” and |
| 1 – Guatemala | inquired about a local congregation. |
| 1 – Uruguay | |
| 1 – Puerto Rico | |
| 1 – Panama | |
| 1 – Nicaragua ¹² | |

The relationship between the English and Spanish congregations

Some may wonder how a church which is divided by language can really be united. The unity which the English and Spanish congregations share is the unity of faith. How do the pastors and the congregations work together as they walk together in that faith?

Pastor Wattles and Pastor Satorius have individual areas of responsibility and accountability at Grace Lutheran Church. Generally, Pastor Wattles is responsible for ministry in the English language and Pastor Satorius for ministry in Spanish. Although the pastors concentrate on their specific areas of ministry, they still try to stay involved with the congregation not directly under their care.

Grace has also participated in the Vicar in Mission Settings program since 2007. The vicars who are assigned to Grace split their time between English and Spanish ministry. They enjoy the unique opportunity of experiencing a broad taste of ministry.

Leaders in the congregations have coordinated efforts to bring the two congregations together. There are two bilingual services held every year and others are planned on a year-to-year basis. The first Sunday of January has become known as International Sunday. After a bilingual service, all of the people enjoy a potluck of international dishes. In September, the congregations come together again for an outdoor worship service and picnic.

Grace Lutheran School has also served as a mixing point for the English and Spanish-speaking parents of students. The relatively small enrollment (about seventy) promotes a family like atmosphere and school events bring the parents together.

Perhaps the most unifying activities at Grace are those which are unplanned. The community festival that Grace holds every May is a great way to meet members of the community, but it requires many volunteers to help set up and run the event. Before and after such an event, everyone works together to accomplish the task regardless of the spoken language. A sense of team is developed when people come together and work towards a common goal.

The congregations are also united on more practical levels. There is one church budget and both English and Spanish speakers are invited to the voters meetings. One of original members of the Spanish speaking nucleus currently serves on the Board of Elders which helps keep the congregations connected. A second Spanish-speaker has been nominated to the Board of Trustees for 2010. At this time, the chairmen, the council members and all of the other board members except for the aforementioned men are from the English congregation. Many of the Spanish speakers are still young in their faith and the hope is that as they mature, they will be willing and equipped to serve as leaders of the church.

God's Grace Evident at Grace Lutheran Church

Within ten years, Hispanic ministry at Grace went from an idea for ministry to a ministry reality. The history of Spanish language ministry at Grace Lutheran Church in Falls Church, Virginia shows how God has blessed the efforts of this congregation to reach out to people of other nationalities with the gospel. Everyone at Grace Lutheran Church and La Iglesia Luteran

Gracia y Paz would agree that it is only by God's grace that they have started and carried out Spanish language ministry. May God in his grace continue to bless their efforts.

Bibliography

Satorius, Tim. Personal interview, 11/16/2009.

Wattles, Kevin. Personal interview, 11/2/2009.

Addenda

Revised Basic Information and Request Form..... Addendum 1.

Letter to North Atlantic District Mission Board.....Addendum 2.

Spanish Language Outreach Pastor Call Letter.....Addendum 3.

Pastor Satorius' first sermon at Grace.....Addendum 4.

Iglesia Luterana Gracia y Paz three year anniversary pamphlet..... Addendum 5.

Addendum 1-1

BASIC INFORMATION AND REQUEST FORM

BACKGROUND DATA			
NAME OF CONGREGATION OR LOCATION MAKING THE REQUEST:		Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church	
CITY and STATE/PROVINCE:		Falls Church, Virginia	
DISTRICT MISSION BOARD:		North Atlantic District Mission Board	
PASTOR PRESENTLY SERVING THIS FIELD:		Kevin Wattles	
DATE OF REQUEST:	April 1, 2006	DATE EXPLORATORY WORK WAS BEGUN:	Congregation established in 1963.
DATE OF FIRST WORSHIP SERVICE:	Congregation established in 1963.	DATE OF MISSION STATUS:	Congregation established in 1963.

TYPE OF REQUEST (Check all that apply)	
MINISTRY and MANPOWER REQUESTS: OPEN A PREACHING STATION <input type="checkbox"/> BEGIN AN EXPLORATORY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONTINUE AN EXPLORATORY <input type="checkbox"/> RECEIVE MISSION STATUS <input type="checkbox"/> RENEGOTIATE A GRANT AGREEMENT <input type="checkbox"/> CALL A RESIDENT PASTOR: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CALL A CAMPUS PASTOR: <input type="checkbox"/> CALL A STAFF MINISTER: <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: <input type="checkbox"/>	LAND or FACILITIES REQUESTS: LAND SEARCH AUTHORITY: <input type="checkbox"/> LAND PURCHASE: <input type="checkbox"/> FACILITY PLANNING AUTHORITY: <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: <input type="checkbox"/>
DMB PRIORITY #: (To be completed by the DMB)	

PROJECTED COSTS			
MINISTRY and MANPOWER		LAND or FACILITIES	
ESTIMATED TOTAL FIRST YEAR COST:	\$21,281.03 for April 16, 2006 - June 2006	ESTIMATED TOTAL PROJECT COST:	
ESTIMATED FIRST YEAR SUBSIDY NEEDED:	\$10,467 for April 16, 2006 - June 2006	ESTIMATED TOTAL CEF LOAN NEEDED:	

Addendum 1-2

	3 YRS AGO	2 YRS AGO	LAST YEAR	THIS YR TO DATE
1. INDICATE THE YEARS COVERED BY THIS REPORT:	2003	2004	2005	2006
2. NUMBER IN NUCLEUS (EXPL. ONLY):	14 souls	11 souls	8 souls	11 souls
3. NUMBER OF SOULS:	378	401	404	411
4. NUMBER OF COMMUNICANTS:	294	306	313	316
5. NUMBER OF FAMILIES:	208	213	215	217
6. ADULT CONFIRMATIONS:	7	8	8	4
7. AVE. WORSHIP ATTENDANCE:	201	207	205	211 as of 4/2
8. AVE. BIBLE CLASS ATTENDANCE:	64 (adults)	60 (adults)	55 (adults)	55 (adults)
9. AVE. SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE:	48	48	55	55
10. OUTREACH CALLS BY PASTOR:	10 per week	10 per week	10 per week	10 per week
11. OUTREACH CALLS BY LAITY:	2 per week	2 per week	2 per week	2 per week
12. INREACH CALLS BY PASTOR:	20 per week	20 per week	20 per week	20 per week
13. INREACH CALLS BY LAITY:	5 per week	5 per week	5 per week	8 per week
14. ALL PURPOSE OFFERINGS/COMM/YR:	\$2,679	\$2,268	\$2,520	Approx. \$528 as of 3/31
15. SYNOD OFFERINGS/COMM/YR:	\$205	\$167	\$152	Approx. \$38 as of 3/31

Rationale and Strategy for Request

1. A Description of this Field and why it is a good field for North American Outreach:

Regarding "a Description of this Field" please consider the following:

- According to the *2000 U.S. Decennial Census*, the total population of Fairfax County, Virginia (the county in which Grace is located) was 969,749 people. The county's current population is over one million people.
- According to the *2000 U.S. Decennial Census*, 106,958 of the 969,749 people are of Hispanic ethnicity.
- According to the *2000 U.S. Decennial Census*, of the 48,092 people living in the Fairfax County Planning District in which our congregation is located (Jefferson Planning District), 9,657 people are Hispanic. Hispanics make up the highest minority population in the neighborhood around our congregation.
- According to the *2000 U.S. Decennial Census*, of the 18,366 households in the Jefferson Planning District, 2,510 households are occupied by Hispanics. Of those 2,510 households 735 are "linguistically isolated," speaking only Spanish in the household. Second to English, Spanish is the language most often spoken in the neighborhood around our congregation.
- In the *2000 Fairfax-Falls Church Community Assessment* the following observations are made:
 - page 62 "The most prevalent language other than English spoken at home is Spanish (11.4% of households), followed by Vietnamese (2.3 %), Korean (2.0%), Arabic (1.7%), and Chinese (1.7%). More than three-quarters of the Spanish-speaking households indicated that they use a mixture of Spanish and English at home."
 - page 63 "In addition to asking factual information about each household and its members, the *Fairfax-Falls Church Community Assessment* also asked households their perceptions about 20 issues in their local community and if these issues were problems. One of the issues was poor English reading, writing, and speaking skills. Households that speak only another language at home are more likely to perceive poor English communication skills as a major or moderate problem in their community than households that speak at least some English at home. Almost a quarter of households that do not use English at home identified poor English skills as a major problem, and an additional 28% identified poor English skills as a moderate problem in their local community."
 - page 67 "In the Fairfax-Falls Church Area, the *1990 U.S. Decennial Census* estimated that 147,675 persons

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age 5 years or older (18.7%) spoke a language other than English at home...it is estimated that in 2000 the number of persons 5 years or older who spoke a language other than English at home has more than doubled to 320,000 persons. This represents more than a third (34.8%) of all persons age 5 years or older in the Fairfax-Falls Church Area. An additional 27,200 children under the age of 5 years live in homes where a language other than English is spoken at home. Of those persons who live in a home where a language other than English is spoken, more than a quarter (27.1%) live in homes where no English is spoken."

Regarding "a Description of this Field" please also consider the following:

- There are no churches of any Lutheran denomination in Fairfax County specifically carrying out ministry to Spanish-speaking Hispanics.
- The Spanish-speaking ministries that do exist within the vicinity of Grace (5-mile radius) are the following:
 - There is a large Catholic church about 5 miles from Grace that ministers to Spanish-speaking Hispanics. In terms of numbers, this is the most significant Spanish language ministry in Fairfax County. Two of the three Catholic churches closest to Grace do not have a Spanish-speaking ministry.
 - There are two Methodist churches (one about 1 mile away, the other about 3 miles away) that have Spanish language ministries and one Baptist church (about 1 mile away) that carries out Spanish language ministry.
 - The rest of the churches in the vicinity of Grace that minister to Spanish-speaking Hispanics are small (a couple families), Pentecostal / charismatic-type "house churches".
- There are no other WELS churches in Fairfax County, Virginia.

Regarding "why this is a good field for North American Outreach" please consider the following:

The main reason for this outreach ministry is this is what our Lord has commanded and called us to do.

Additionally, this outreach ministry falls directly in-line with the WELS Board for Home Missions' Guiding Principle:

"Seeking our neighbors is the privilege of God's people. God is bringing many people groups to our nations. God has graciously granted us openings into rapidly growing communities, such as the Hispanic and Hmong. We will seek to help cross cultural efforts to the next step, especially those presently existing." ("Working Definition #4")

"We will emphasize, encourage, teach and help facilitate "true" mother-daughter establishing of new ministries." ("Working Definition #5")

Under the Board for Home Missions "Levels" for outreach ministry plan, this is a "Level 2" request. The partnership in this ministry would exist among the "to-be-called" mission pastor, the Spanish-speaking nucleus currently at Grace, the non-Spanish-speaking members of Grace, the WELS Hispanic Ministry Consultant (Pastor Mike Roth), the North Atlantic District Mission Counselor (Pastor John Huebner), the North Atlantic District Board for Home Missions, and the WELS Board for Home Missions.

Furthermore, this outreach ministry proposal fits perfectly with our Synod's focus in "North American Outreach" and "Proclaim Peace Through Jesus".

"We have the privilege, responsibility, and opportunity to proclaim what we know about Jesus with those who don't know him. We proclaim Jesus as individuals in our daily lives as we come in contact with family, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances. We proclaim Jesus through the organized outreach efforts in our individual congregations. And we proclaim Jesus as we partner with fellow believers and congregations throughout the WELS to tell more people about Jesus." (Part 3 of WELS "Proclaim Peace Through Jesus")

2UR - 8/02 What research has been done and by whom?

The statistical information offered in the response under 1. was gathered by the following: the Spanish-speaking nucleus, the Grace Long Range Planning Group, the Grace Church Council and Pastor Kevin Wattles.

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3. **Basic Plan of Action, how it fits in with overall congregational outreach, and who are the equipped and involved "locals":**

Regarding how "Spanish language outreach" fits in with Grace's overall congregational outreach:

This outreach ministry falls directly in-line with Grace's Vision Statement, based on Matthew 28:19-20: "In order to carry out our Savior's Great Commission, we intend:... To reach out with loving Christian witness to all with whom we come into contact, especially those residing in the immediate neighborhood of our church."

Under this Vision, Grace has embarked on the following 4-pronged strategy for outreach and growth that Grace believes will make it an even stronger magnet for Jesus in our community.

- Begin, support and sustain a Spanish language outreach ministry.
- Support and sustain a weekly contemporary-style worship service. This is Grace's 4th weekly worship opportunity. Grace began weekly contemporary worship services on February 26, 2006. Grace has called a Staff Minister (Mr. Levi Nagel) to help facilitate these worship services, as well as to work with the Youth Ministries of our congregation.
- Expansion of physical property and facilities. In April, 2005 Grace purchased a ½ acre property with house that abuts our existing 5 acre property. The house on this property is currently being renovated to serving as housing for one of our Called Workers. The ownership of this property will also help us develop more of our existing 5 acre parcel.

Grace has begun working with a civil engineer, land use attorney and an architect to develop a plan for further expansion of our physical facilities. Grace's last renovation and expansion project was dedicated into service for the glory of God on March 17, 2002 at a cost of about \$2.5 million. Construction of Grace's next project, a Family Life Center, is hoped to begin within the next four years. Grace's strategy with a "Family Life Center" is that it would not just be for our congregation's use, but a tool for helping us reach into the community, and a haven for the community to come to us.

- National Accreditation of Grace Lutheran School (GLS). While some of our Synod's elementary schools have struggled over the past decade and even closed, GLS has been blessed with a significant increase in enrollment. Much of this increase has come from GLS and Grace congregation using the school as an outreach tool in our community.

GLS was asked by our Synod's Board for Parish Education to participate in a pilot program for national accreditation of our Synod's elementary schools. GLS began the accreditation process in the Spring of 2004. In March, 2006, after GLS was reviewed by an "Accreditation Visiting Team", GLS received a "recommendation for full accreditation." The national accreditation of GLS will become "official" in September of this year. Grace is thankful to our gracious Lord for granting us the blessing of accreditation. We believe that the national accreditation of GLS through the National Council of Private Schools will be an asset for our congregation's efforts to reach out to our community through our Lutheran school.

As you can see, Grace's 4-pronged strategy to make Grace an even stronger magnet for Jesus is fairly aggressive and wide-reaching. We are inviting the WELS BHM to partner with us in this exciting venture, particularly by helping support Grace's Spanish language outreach ministry.

Regarding what is "the Basic Plan of Action" for this outreach ministry:

The Basic Plan of Action is in its initial phase at this point. Grace has worked with the WELS Hispanic Ministry Consultant, Pastor Mike Roth, and the North Atlantic District Mission Counselor, Pastor John Huebner, to develop this Basic Plan of Action. At this point, here's where The Plan is at:

Step 1:
BIR - 8/02

Call a pastor to lead this outreach ministry.

Our gracious Lord has worked to enable us to complete this first step. In the Spring of 2005 Grace received a generous grant from the WELS BHM to enable Grace to call a pastor for full-time Spanish language outreach ministry in Fairfax County, Virginia. On Sunday, June 12, 2005, Grace called Pastor Timothy Satorius to this ministry. In August, 2005, the Lord moved Pastor Satorius to accept the Call to serve as Spanish Language Outreach Pastor in the Falls Church, Virginia, area. Pastor Satorius and his family are

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scheduled to arrive in Falls Church to begin this outreach ministry on or about April 19, 2006.

Step 2:

Pastor Satorius will consult with the current Spanish-speaking nucleus, as well as our Synod's Hispanic Ministry Consultant (Pastor Mike Roth), as to the best approach to beginning this outreach ministry. Grace does not think it would be good for the overall and long-term success of this outreach ministry for anyone to mandate to Pastor Satorius what his initial approaches to this ministry ought to be. Grace believes it to be in the best interest of the success of this outreach effort for Pastor Satorius to have maximum input into the initial outreach plans, and to therefore have his "buy in" to the plan.

Perhaps Pastor Satorius and the nucleus will find that the best approach to beginning this outreach ministry may be through outreach programs for youth, through Grace's existing ESL program, by beginning Spanish worship services and / or Spanish Bible studies. Again, at this point Grace isn't certain what would be the best way to start. Grace believes that this step will be best determined by Pastor Satorius, the Spanish-speaking nucleus and our Synod's Hispanic Ministry Consultant after Pastor Satorius' arrival in Falls Church.

Pastor Satorius and the nucleus may also find it beneficial to consult with other congregations who have taken this approach, for example, St. Thomas in Phoenix, Arizona.

Regarding "who are the equipped and involved *locals*":

The existing Spanish-speaking nucleus at Grace is comprised of a Bolivian family (husband, wife, 1 daughter and 2 sons] who were Grace's first Spanish-speaking "converts" about six years ago. They are very committed WELS members. A second family consists of a Caucasian husband, Mexican wife and two sons. The Caucasian husband is fluent in Spanish. And finally, another Spanish-speaking couple is comprised of a Caucasian husband and Panamanian wife. The husband has roots in the LC-MS and the wife is "coming over to the WELS" from a Presbyterian church. All of these adults have committed their support and involvement to this outreach ministry.

Additionally, the English-speaking members of Grace have committed to actively being involved with this outreach ministry in whatever ways they can as English speakers. It should be noted that the English-speaking members of Grace are already doing outreach to Spanish speaking Hispanics through existing ministries such as ESL, Vacation Bible School, Grace Lutheran Elementary School, and at our congregation's annual open house (called "Meet Us, Meet Your Neighbor") which has drawn about 600 people *from our community* every year of its existence.

4. Who will be the "key driver" in the field?

The "key drivers" in this field will be Pastor Timothy Satorius with support from Pastor Kevin Wattles and the Grace Church Council. We also anticipate Pastor Satorius working closely with, and receiving guidance from, our Synod's Hispanic ministry consultant, Pastor Michael Roth, and our district Mission Counselor, Pastor John Huebner. Pastor Satorius will not be a "lone ranger" in the work here in Falls Church. He will have the support and cooperation of the above-mentioned Spanish-speaking nucleus that already exists within the congregation.

5. Who is the DMB point of contact?

Pastor Tim Wempner, DMB Chairman for the North Atlantic District.

6. What resources are needed and for how long?

Grace is asking the WELS BHM to provide funding for Pastor Satorius in terms of:

- Salary (at Synod code) for a period of about 2-1/2 years (approximately April 2006 - June 2008).
- Medical insurance (WELS VEBA) for Pastor Satorius and his family for a period of about 2-1/2 years (approximately April 2006 - June 2008).

Grace is committed to providing the following resources for this outreach ministry:

- 100% of housing costs (rental house and basic utilities).
- 100% of car allowance (reimbursement at Synod code)
- 100% of costs of carrying out this ministry (office space, computer, cell phone, office supplies, worship and Bible study supplies, outreach materials, etc.)
- 100% of relocation costs from port-of-entry (Miami, FL) to Falls Church.

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- Use of Grace facilities as necessary for the work of _____ this ministry.

In terms of "actual dollars" being requested from the WELS BHM for this outreach ministry, Grace asks for the following:

April 2006 - June 2006 \$10,467 (Grace commits \$10,814.03 plus moving expenses to this outreach ministry.)
July 2006 - June 2007 \$49,464 (Grace commits \$54,378.58 to this outreach ministry.)
July 2007 - June 2008 \$37,489 (Grace commits \$66,353.58 to this outreach ministry.)

7. What are the plans for future financial support?

It is important to recognize that Grace has been blessed by God with a rich history of taking part in outreach ministries and mission congregations in the Washington DC area. For example, in 1981 Grace was directly involved in starting a "daughter congregation", Bethlehem, in Manassas, Virginia. And for more than 30 years members of Grace have "had a hand" in starting WELS missions in Largo, Maryland (Divine Peace in 1970), in Sterling, Virginia (Christ Our Savior in 1988), and in Woodbridge, Virginia (Trinity in 1992).

Grace is just as committed to beginning and sustaining long-term this Spanish language outreach ministry as it has been to all the above listed ministries. It would be inappropriate to think that Grace would "default" on this ministry and "leave the Synod holding the bag."

To support these statements, please consider the following:

- Between 1996 and the present Grace has increased its annual budget from \$277,233 in 1996 to \$999,221 in 2006.
- In 2005 offerings totaled \$834,895. 2005 offerings were \$71,693 more than in 2004.
- In 2005 Grace's Synod Mission Offering was \$45,000.
- Grace has budgeted \$47,250 to give to the Synod Mission Offering in 2006.
- In January of this year Grace contributed \$10,000 to WELS World Missions for the specific purpose of keeping the Brazilian mission field funded and operational.

8. What is the "best case" time line?

We expect and plan for this outreach ministry to be free from WELS BHM funding by June 2008.

Officer: _____ David Metzger, *Chairman of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church*
Pastor: _____ Kevin Wattles
DMB representative: _____

Addendum 2-1

March 18, 2005

Dear Members of the North Atlantic District Board for Home Missions:

Greetings in the name of our risen and ascended Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who has commissioned us to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19)!

It is in the spirit of the risen Christ and of gospel outreach in his name that we bring this proposal before you for partnership between the WELS Board for Home Missions and our congregation, Grace, Falls Church, Virginia, to do gospel outreach to Spanish-speaking Hispanics in the Falls Church area.

On behalf of the members of our congregation we thank you for taking the time and making the effort to consider this partnership opportunity. Should you and your fellow members of the WELS Board for Home Missions agree to partner with us, we heartily look forward to working with you in this great outreach opportunity that our Lord has placed before us.

Sincerely in Christ,

Kevin Wattles
Pastor, Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

David Metzger
Chairman, Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

Enclosures: Basic Information and Request Form with answers to "Eight Questions"
 Board for Home Missions' Budget Form 2005-2007, rev. December, 2004

Addendum 3-1

June 16, 2005

Dear Pastor Satorius:

Greetings! We hope this letter finds you and your family doing well and basking in the joy and hope of faith in our Risen Lord Jesus Christ!

With this correspondence we are pleased to Call you as Spanish Language Outreach Pastor at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Falls Church, Virginia. Enclosed you will find a variety of information about this Call including:

- The Call document itself;
- A Ministry Position Description;
- Information on Compensation Package;
- List of phone numbers for Grace members, pastors and teachers whom you may want to call with questions;
- A copy of the Spanish Language Outreach Ministry Grant Proposal approved by the WELS Board for Home Missions;
- A "Grace bag" with a variety of information about our congregation, and some of our promotional materials;
- A package of information regarding Falls Church, Fairfax County and the Washington Metro area.

Pastor Satorius, we are excited that you have received this Call and will petition our gracious Lord asking for His blessing and guidance upon you and your family as you consider where the Lord wants you to serve Him.

I will give you a few days to "mull over" this Call package and telephone you early next week to talk with you.

Sincerely in Christ,

Dave Metzger, *Chairman*
Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

Spanish Language Outreach Pastor

Qualification:

A member, in good standing, of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod who is eligible for a call into the pastoral ministry of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

Ministry Position Description:

- Lead Spanish Language Outreach Ministry at Grace;
- Work together with, and in harmony with, the members of Grace, the existing ministries of Grace, Pastor Beckmann, Pastor Wattles, and the teachers of GLS;
- Do all that may be necessary for the advancement of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Washington metro area.

Ministry Gifts:

- Someone who reflects the love of Jesus for him in his love for others;
- Someone who has a passion for Christ-like ministry;
- Someone who carries out his ministry with an evangelical attitude;
- Someone who protects the reputation and integrity of others through strict confidentiality;
- Someone who is trustworthy;
- Someone who has a clear understanding of WELS doctrine and practice;
- Someone who is "a good preacher";
- Someone who is "a good teacher";
- Someone who is "a good leader";
- Someone with initiative;
- Someone who is approachable;
- Someone who is well-organized;
- Someone who is creative and adaptable;
- Someone who has good communication skills (verbal and written);
- Someone with good people skills;
- Someone who would work well in a multi-cultural setting;
- Someone who is willing to learn about Hispanic / Latino culture in our area;
- Someone who is willing to learn, and who learns quickly;
- Someone who speaks Spanish fluently.

Spanish Language Outreach Pastor Compensation Package

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>BASIS</u>	<u>ANNUAL AMOUNT</u>	<u>2005 AMOUNT</u>
Salary	Pastor, WELS grid E/7	40,867	20,434
Housing, provided*			
Utilities*	Estimated	3000	1500
Local telephone service*	Basic plan \$50 per month	600	300
Medical insurance	VEBA plan, \$500 deduct /person	17076	8538
Disability insurance	% salary covered equal to current called workers	500	250
Mileage	41 cents/ mile, est. 5,000 mi	2050	1025
Cell phone (contract equivalent with Pastor Wattles)		600	300

* Housing will be provided in one of two ways...it's your choice:

- Live in Grace-owned home with utilities (water, gas, electric, sewer and basic phone service) paid for by Grace and receive a Housing Equity Allowance (based on 2% of annual salary as listed in yearly budget and put into a fund in your name). The "fair rental value" of the house (for tax purposes) is \$1,500 per month.
- Receive \$2,000 per month housing allowance through which you would purchased a home and pay utilities (water, gas, electric, sewer and basic phone service).

Also, Grace will provide the following:

- All items, materials, etc. necessary for carrying out your ministerial duties, including a computer at church with internet and email;
- Conference expenses;
- Continuing education.

Contact Numbers for Grace Members Whom You May Want To Contact

Mark Becker - 202.562-3508
Chairman, Board of Elders

Pastor Walt Beckmann - 703.573-1327
Semi-retired Pastor and retired District President

Dave Metzger - 703.455-4718
Chairman

Larry Povinelli - 703.671-5349
Chairman, Board of Christian Education

Bob Rebers - 703.536-8629
Principal, Grace Lutheran Elementary School

Elissa Schmidt - 703.941-7295
Teacher, Grace Lutheran Elementary School

Susan Westendorf - 703.560-0805
Teacher, Grace Lutheran Elementary School

Isaiah 56:1-8 – "Open the Door"

By Pastor Timothy Satorius

Preached at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

Falls Church, Virginia

4th Sunday of Easter, Sunday-Monday, May 7-8, 2006

The question everyone has been asking us: How do you like Virginia? Even though it's only been a matter of days: so far, so good. The second question everyone is asking is: How did you like Antigua? What was it like living in Antigua? It was different from life in Virginia. I haven't seen a palm tree, although Mr. Rebers has some banana plants in his yard. Kids play cricket instead of baseball. We drove on pothole covered roads instead beltways. I miss hearing Calypso music. I don't miss paying \$7 for a gallon of milk!

Maybe someone has been to Antigua on a cruise, or on holiday? I know that Pastor and Mrs. Beckmann have visited Antigua. But I'm sure you can all imagine: Visiting a country is not the same as living there. As an example, I brought along my last work permit. For the young people who maybe don't know what a work permit is... Usually you work to get paid. A work permit is when you pay to work! Non-citizens have to get a work permit to work in another country. So once a year, I would go to the labor department, get my application, 2 forms, 3 copies each, fill them out, affixing the church seal. Then usually I would take it back to Labour, forgetting I had to go to the Treasury department to pay my \$10 application fee. Then back to Labour, where they would give me my payment form, so back to Treasury, then take the receipt back to Labour (2 weeks-Cabinet). After it was approved, take the whole thing to Immigration to extend my time.

At least it was only once a year! But getting a work permit was not unusual in Antigua. Thousands of residents and many members of our church in Antigua were there on work permits. I think Lutherans in Antigua have come from at least 15 countries. There are Dominicans—the Spanish speakers I worked with. Jamaicans—Syrians—Trinidadians. As you can see, Antigua is an island that is friendly to immigration. There are economic reasons and historical reasons and popular reasons. One of the reasons is a strong desire to be united, to be independent of the US, of American influences. There are some negative attitudes toward the US. Still many people want to visit, study, work, and live in America.

I don't need to tell you what you have been watching more closely than I. Here in the US, there are many attitudes about immigration. Immigration has become more difficult and attitudes have become even more polarized than ever. On the one hand, many people say: let the foreigners stay away, close the borders, build higher fences, post guards. On the other hand, there are those who want to open the borders and open the door to all. It's a very complicated issue or set of issues, considering the economic impact, the cultural differences, the racial biases that exist. What makes it an even more interesting debate is that almost everyone here can trace their roots back to ancestors who were immigrants, as recently as a generation or two.

Our money says: "In God we trust," yet God doesn't give his opinion on certain things like immigration. I guess we should distinguish between legal and illegal immigration. Illegal

immigration is illegal, sinful. Yet legal or illegal, it affects all of us, our lives and even our mission. We have heard how some of our missionaries have been called back home due to dangerous conditions in the countries where they are living. Yet the Lord is in charge and sometimes the church is even blessed and grows in maturity and in numbers. There is little denying that our closest foreign mission fields are inside our borders as immigrants are coming in. The Lord is in charge of that too.

God doesn't give his opinion with regard to immigration from country to country. We leave that debate behind this morning and, as usual, we turn to God's word, today to a portion of the Old Testament. The prophet Isaiah used the idea of what we could call "Spiritual immigration" to help us understand God and his love for the world and our mission in the world.

Isaiah 56:1-8

Isaiah wrote in the Old Testament, in the time before Christ. Old Testament Israel had the strictest of immigration policies. When they reached the promised land of Canaan, they announced: "We are taking this land." At God's command they killed the idolaters. God told them not to intermarry with them and called any other people "unclean." If a foreigner did want in among God's people, the requirements were severe, starting with being circumcised. Even then when converts came to the Temple, they wouldn't be allowed into the inner area. We might get the idea that God didn't want them, or didn't love them or even care much for them, but that would not be true. v.3—**Let no foreigner say: Surely the Lord will exclude me from his people.**

God did not want to **exclude** anybody, but he did want to separate for himself a special people, his people, and then through them to bless all people. God separated Israel and made them different by giving them special laws to regulate their diet and their worship (the days and the ways that they would come to him). The Jews were automatically different from every other nation because of their circumcision and sabbaths and sacrifices, but their hearts were different because of their faith in the Savior. With every day of rest and every burnt offering God was teaching them about Christ. For Jews, their keeping the sabbath and offering sacrifices was the same thing as our confessing that Jesus is the only "name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

That same Jesus made the greatest yet most difficult immigration ever, leaving heaven to become flesh and make his dwelling among us. Immigrants usually know that many sacrifices are ahead of them. Jesus was no different: he came, and his own did not receive him. He had no place to lay his head. Immigrants are willing to make the sacrifice because they know that eventually they will have a payback—freedom or fortune. Jesus came, not looking for any payback for himself, but to save humanity by paying for our sins with his death on the cross and bring us back home with him!

v.1 says: Maintain justice and do what is right. That is a good summary of God's will. This is also a good time for us to reflect. The truth is we haven't always maintained justice and done what is right. We have as much right to God's mercy as citizens who have renounced

their citizenship to go off to some terrorist state or banana republic, only to come back and say: "I changed my mind. I liked it here anyway. I pledge allegiance. Give me back my citizenship." Our lack of perfect justice and failing to always do what is right placed us outside the borders of God's kingdom. Yet God for Christ's sake has opened the door of his kingdom and the very door to heaven to us.

In Ephesians chapter 2, God tells us: **Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household.** Even better than citizenship, we are family. God has opened the door and brought us home as his adopted sons, legitimate sons, chosen to be his sons and to be given the full rights of sons—his love, his protection, a future.

If we wanted to describe God's policy of Spiritual immigration, we would say it's definitely an open door policy., not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. At the same time God is against illegal immigration into his kingdom. The most common way of obtaining citizenship is by being born in a country. Unfortunately there are people who think they are in because they were born Christians—to God that is illegal immigration, because we are born sinful. Another common way of getting citizenship is to present a clean record, pay your money and pledge allegiance. Unfortunately works Christianity is also illegal immigration because even our righteousness is like filthy rags.. Getting to heaven on our own merits would be like swimming from Miami to Antigua—too far for even the best swimmer. Only through faith in Christ, but through faith the door is wide open and open to all.

It's clear that the Lord throws the door open for all. Open the door is his policy, so open the door will also be our policy.

v.6-7. You can sense the way God wants to pull people to himself. "I will bring them in." It's always God's work. God does bring them in—he has brought us in. v.8. God reminds his people: I will gather still others to them besides those already gathered. Reminding us of the words of Jesus, the Good Shepherd—I have other sheep not of this fold...I must bring them in...one fold...one shepherd.

When he said "let no one say...surely the Lord will exclude me," the Lord was talking to his people, motivating his people. His people won't just say that the door is always open! We won't just tell the foreigner that the door is always open! Our responsibility is to make sure the foreigner sees that the door is always open and feels welcome to come in!

As far as evangelism, the key word in the Old Testament was **Come** In this passage: to his people, his mountain, his house, his altar. Like a magnet God wanted to pull people to himself. In the New Testament, the key word is **Go** . Into all the world, to every creature, preach the gospel, make disciples, be my witnesses. Like a slingshot, God wants us to go out and bring others. God wants his church to open the door. Others will come in. His witnesses will go out. Come back and bring someone in.

When God says that his house will be a "house of prayer for all nations," that's not just a pious wish or a lofty goal. That's God's promise and the reality. Of course, his house is not

Grace Lutheran or any congregation—it's the invisible church. It's the multitude John first saw and we see in Revelation made up of people of every nation, tribe, people, language. But each congregation can be part of it, a small imitation of it, as each congregation will look around and respond to the opportunities God gives them.

Several years ago I preached at the church (Mt Lebanon) where I grew up. Even after many years I still recognized many familiar faces. But there was one big difference: behind the wooden doors of the church was a big gate of iron bars. I guess that is the reality of the inner city life in Milwaukee. But every church needs to consider: how to keep safe what is inside while leaving the door open to others. It is a privilege for me to be part of that here. By virtue of the call I am taking up and working with Hispanic Outreach. I wish I could tell you more about Hispanics in Fairfax County...maybe in six months...But I think you know the opportunity we have. I think you recognize the need. The majority of Hispanics—"born" Christian. The rest—"works" Christianity. Unfortunately that often doesn't allow them to see clearly the open door to heaven through Christ. We have a long way to go, but we have gotten started.

Open the door. That's God's policy. That's our policy. Is that your policy? I mean personally.

Personally make it your policy. Pray for spiritual immigration...Pray that it gets out of hand for us here. Support Hispanic Outreach here. Speak up. Even if your Spanish isn't so good. If you need a shot of encouragement and confidence, remember Jesus' prayer on Maundy Thursday evening (John chapter 17). Prayed that his Father be glorified. Prayed for his disciples. Then (v.21) he prayed "for those who will believe in me through their message." Someone, somewhere is saying, or thinking: Surely the Lord will exclude me. You know them. You have contact with them. Tell them it's not true. Show them it's not true. Let them know that our Savior opened the door for them and you are holding it open for them.

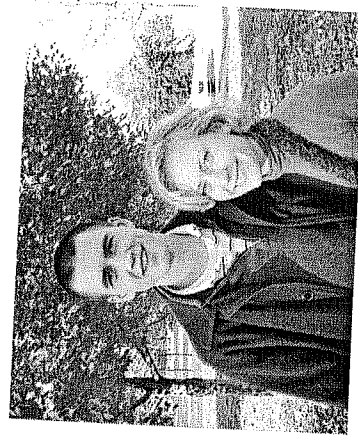
Do you remember the old ads from Motel Six?—This is Tom Boudette and "We'll leave the light on for you." New friends, Let's keep the door open! Let no one say...surely the Lord will exclude me from his people. No one. Amen.

Los vicarios



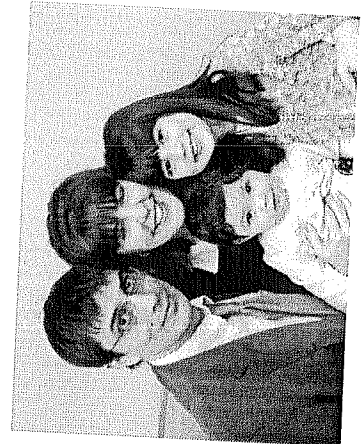
agosto 2007-agosto 2008

Esteban Kuehl
(Charis)



agosto 2008-agosto 2009

Ryan Cortright
(Sarah y Oliver)

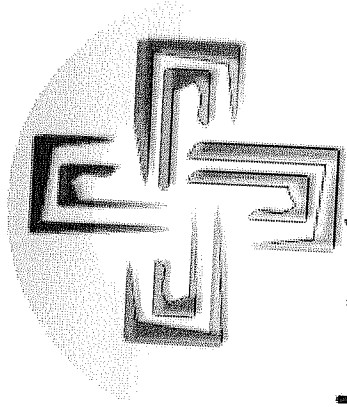


enero 2009-junio 2009

Andrés Reina
(Michelle, Keziah,
Karyna)



19 noviembre 2006



Iglesia Luterana
Gracia y Paz

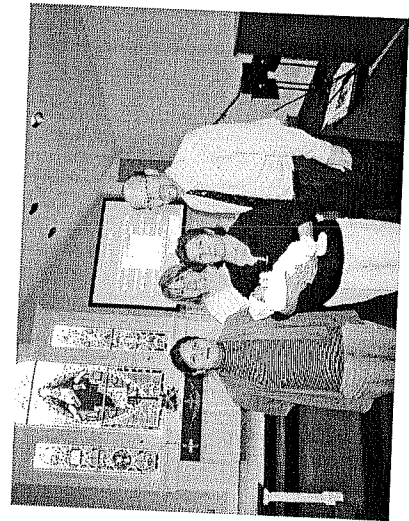
22 de noviembre 2009

Bautismos

Aaron Ernesto Valenzuela 22 abril 2007
 Alan Ernesto Valenzuela 22 abril 2007
 Barbara Isabel Naranjo 11 julio 2007
 Wilhelm Maximilian Huber 16 septiembre 2007
 Matthew Ricardo Montero 27 octubre 2007
 Nicolas Sebastián Montero 27 octubre 2007
 Ennio Estuardo Moscoso 10 enero 2008
 Matheo Alexander Valdivia 22 marzo 2008
 Anthony Rivera 6 abril 2008
 Eric Rivera 6 abril 2008
 Christian Perez Kelly 25 mayo 2008
 Orquideas Kelly Jones 25 mayo 2008
 Angel Najera 12 abril 2009
 Alejandro Vargas 25 mayo 2009
 Jorge Vargas 25 mayo 2009
 Leonela Brianna Prado 5 septiembre 2009
 Mauricio Cabrera Chizuco 20 septiembre 2009
 Sarah Janelle Vargas 25 octubre 2009

Confirmaciones

Javier Cáceres 1 abril 2007
 María Santibáñez 1 abril 2007
 Chuck Johnson 1 abril 2007
 Mona Lisa Johnson 1 abril 2007
 Ernesto Valenzuela 22 abril 2007
 Viviana Valenzuela 22 abril 2007
 Blanca Araujo 19 agosto 2007
 Walter Castro 23 marzo 2008
 Karina Davis 23 marzo 2008
 Orquideas Kelly-Jones 23 marzo 2008
 Dionisio Rivera 6 abril 2008
 Dania Rivera 6 abril 2008
 Tyler Satorius 8 junio 2008
 Gustavo Valdivia 22 junio 2008
 Cinthia Valdivia 22 junio 2008
 Mary Alvarado 21 diciembre 2008
 José Carlos Domínguez 21 diciembre 2008
 Hilda Ivette Domínguez 21 diciembre 2008
 Marcelina Guevara 4 enero 2009
 Claudia Palacios 4 enero 2009
 Rosario Villarreal de Carrasco 1 marzo 2009
 José Alberto Magallanes 12 abril 2009
 Percy Iparraguirre 3 mayo 2009
 Yuli Ochoa 3 mayo 2009
 Wilson la Torre 7 junio 2009
 Saul Lara 7 junio 2009
 Lady Najera 7 junio 2009
 María Rojas 7 junio 2009
 Rodney García 7 junio 2009
 Rodrigo Venttiades 7 junio 2009



“Sé fiel hasta la
 muerte y yo te
 daré la corona
 de la vida”
 (Apoc 2:10)